

Sports

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(F1C)

Monday, December 8, 1986 O&E

The showdown in Southfield

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

It's showtime.

The long-awaited, much-discussed showdown between the two best Class A girls basketball teams in Southfield is here: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Southfield High School. Plymouth Salem (24-1) vs. Farmington Hills Mercy (18-6). Class A quarterfinals. Winner advances to the state semifinals in Grand Rapids.

Drum roll, please.

Why is this such a big deal? Most of this has been said or written before, but in case you missed it, here's why:

- The game will match two of the most successful and most respected coaching staffs in the state. For Salem, head coach Fred Thumann, assistants Dave Edwards, Tom Williams and Dave Van Wagoner against Mercy's head coach Larry Baker and assistants Mike King and Jim McKee. There's close to 500 wins on these benches.

- The game will showcase two blue-chip players: junior Dona Head for Salem and senior Yvette Malson for Mercy.

- And, obviously, the game matches two superb basketball teams.

Get the picture?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE.

These two teams know each other so well it's almost frightening. They know each others' out-of-bounds plays (both teams will add new ones prior to Wednesday's game), they know each others' defensive schemes, press structures and basic offensive patterns. They know which player the other likes to go to in critical situations, they know which player can dribble left handed and which can't. They know which player to foul in certain situations and which player not to.

These teams have been scouting each other since summer team camp with Wednesday's game in mind. They are bonded. Baker, in fact, thinks the situation may be getting out of hand.

"I mean, we are exceptionally familiar with each other," he said. "Mike King is starting to look like a Salem coach. He is losing his hair like Fred Thumann. He's starting to walk with a swagger like Edwards, and he keeps complaining to me about playing zone defense. I'm starting to get concerned."

It's important to keep your sense of humor at a time like this. But on Wednesday, it'll be all business.

"WE ARE real excited about playing Salem," Baker said. "We have a tradition of great games and I don't mind the underdog role, as we were last year (Mercy upset Salem in the Class A regional last year)."

"I would say there were a number of keys from our point of view. Salem has quality athletes, and they are well-versed in the skill areas. There aren't many clubs in their armor. We think we may have spotted a couple. If we don't take advantage of them, it could be a very long night for us."

Said Thumann: "This will be a great game. We beat

them 51-31 earlier this season (Sept. 27) but we had a great sprint at the end of that game. It was pretty close through three quarters. We're talking about one of the final eight teams in the state. Both teams have a great tradition, and this is a great rivalry."

"The team that goes out and executes like it has all year is the team that will win. I don't see a blowout from either team. I think it will be a nip-and-tuck game."

TICKET INFORMATION: Fred Goldberg, Southfield athletic director, will issue 500 tickets to each school. Tickets, \$2 each, will not be available at the door if those 1,000 tickets are sold out.

Salem will put its tickets on sale from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday. Tickets can be purchased at the athletic office.

Mercy will put its tickets on sale from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday and Tuesday at the school's reception desk and athletic office.

Mercy cruises to regional title

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

As blowouts go, this one wasn't bad.

In fact, Farmington Hills Mercy's 55-35 bashing of Dearborn Edsel Ford Thursday night in the Class A girls basketball regional championship at Northville was quite entertaining.

In the first half Mercy put on a clinic — no, a series of clinics: how to pester your opponent with full court pressure, how to shut off your opponent's leading scorer, how to select your shots and make them, how to win your state-record seventh consecutive regional championship and have fun doing it.

Then in the second half, Edsel Ford helped keep the crowd awake by turning the basketball game into something resembling a hockey game. There were hip checks, cross checks, there was some slashing, the tempo increased — a good time was had by all (except perhaps the two officials, who afterwards looked as if they had chased a couple of slippery rabbits around a field non-stop for two hours).

WHEN IT WAS OVER, Mercy coach Larry Baker reflected on the unprecedented seven straight regional wins — an amazing feat considering the gradually increasing number of outstanding girls basketball programs in the southeastern Michigan region. Edsel Ford, for example, posted 17 wins this season.

"We are very proud of it," said Baker of the streak. "When you look and see such top-notch programs as Detroit St. Martin de Porres and Leland out of the tournament already you realize it's not a given to get this far under any circumstances. To be among the final eight teams in the state

girls basketball

that many times is a significant accomplishment."

The regional championship win also allows Baker and his team to give a little in-your-face treatment to those cynics across the state who denied Mercy a state ranking for much of the season because of the team's six losses.

"I just have to say something about our schedule again. All but three of our regular-season opponents this year have won district titles. The trade off for playing that type of schedule has been taking a beating in the rankings. But when you win the regional you are in the top 10, uncontested, regardless of your record," said Baker.

And Mercy's 18-6 record, it should be pointed out, isn't exactly last month's poultry. But let's get back to the game.

THE MERCY PRESS forced Edsel Ford into 11 turnovers in the first quarter. The T-Birds managed to fire off only five shots in the quarter. The Marlin's, behind some torrid outside shooting, raced ahead 16-3.

Second quarter. More of the same. Ford got off four shots and turned the ball over nine more times. Mercy, who hit 16 of 28 shots in the half, led 35-3.

"We wanted to make them put the ball on the floor," Baker said. "We felt they were a good passing team, but when they put the ball down (dribbled it) their heads went down, too."

Edsel Ford's roughhousing tactics worked well in the second half. The T-Birds managed to



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Jan Horberholz (white jersey) battles Edsel Ford's Tracy Acker for a loose ball during

Mercy's 55-35 regional championship victory Thursday night.

outscore Mercy 26-24 in the second half. Don't laugh, a moral victory is a moral victory.

Yvette Malson led all scorers with 19 points. She got some inside shots she got some outside.

Adrienne Clark, who fouled out in the final quarter, scored 11. Jan Horberholz (10) and Margaret De-

Matta (nine) combined for another 19.

But DeMatta's main contribution was defense. Sekyra fielded Ford's top gun Kim Dapprich to just one field goal and three points. Dapprich, a good three inches taller than DeMatta, scored 17 Tuesday night against

Highland Park.

Ford (17-9) was led by Lori Cub's 12 points (10 in the second half).

And while we're on the subject of entertainment, the Marlin's will take on Plymouth Salem in the quarterfinals, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Southfield.

Salem smashes Trenton

By Bill Parker
staff writer

There was no way of getting past the Rocks in Gibraltar.

Although the Trenton Trojannes gave it their best shot, there was no way around the towering Plymouth Salem Rocks.

The Rocks ambushed the much smaller, albeit quicker, Trojannes Thursday night in the Class A girls basketball regional championship at Gibraltar Carlton High School.

When the dust cleared Salem stood tall, with a 52-23 victory. "I'm just delighted," said Salem coach Fred Thumann. "I'm delighted that we played so well in such a well-played game. Trenton was emotionally involved and physically ready. They're a good team. They made us remember what basketball is all about in terms of a big game."

Salem's Dona Head was the biggest obstacle blocking Trenton. The junior forward dumped in a game-high 20 points.

"(Head) was the difference in the game," said Trenton coach John Biedenbach, whose team finished the season at 20-4. "Cut her points in half, and we're back in the game. She's a great player. She's Division I all the way."

SPEEDSTERS BRIDGET Mahalak and Cesarz kept Trenton close in the early minutes of the game.

But it was Head doing the damage for the Rocks. She connected on a three-point play late in the first quarter to put her team ahead 12-9.

With time running out, Head dropped in the final two of her 11 first-quarter points as Salem pushed ahead 16-10.

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Pioneer under investigation, may lose cross country title

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

The Ann Arbor School District has organized an in-house investigation of the Ann Arbor Pioneer girls cross country program. The focus of the investigation is on the eligibility of former Plymouth Canton runner Rachel Mann. Mann transferred to Ann Arbor Pioneer last summer.

If Mann is found ineligible, Ann Arbor Pioneer may have to forfeit the Class A girls cross country state championship it won last November.

"We are definitely looking into it," said Wiley Brownlee, assistant superintendent of Ann Arbor Schools, who ordered the in-house investigation. "We are reluctant to speculate on what the conclusions might be at this point. We do not want to box people in or put people in jeopardy. It's best just to say we are looking into it."

Brownlee said that the following events were true and prompted the investigation:

- RACHEL MANN and her father moved in with another family in Ann Arbor last summer while waiting for their own Ann Arbor home to become available.

- When the Manns finally moved into their new residence, they discovered that the home was within the Ann Arbor Huron district.

- The Michigan High School Athletic Association has been apprised of the situation. The MHSAA, the governing body of high school athletics in this state,

advised the district to conduct its own investigation before taking further action. The actual investigation is being conducted by Larry Dishman, head of Ann Arbor's Parks and Recreation Department.

"It is being discussed in-house," said Dishman. "I don't think it should be discussed in the paper at this point. I can't say much more about it."

Brownlee said that the investigation's primary concern was whether Mann was eligible to compete in the fall season after moving from the Plymouth-Canton Community School District in the summer.

"We're not all that concerned about the fact that she moved first with another family," Brownlee said. "As far as we're concerned, she was living with her father, and that was her residence. If somebody moves in and has to stay at a motel for a couple of months, that's still their residence. What we want to find out is, did she lose eligibility by changing districts?"

MANN WAS a standout runner for Plymouth Canton, both in cross country and track. She was a first-team All-Area cross country selection as a sophomore at Canton in 1985. She was second team All-Area in track last spring.

Over the spring and summer months Mann trained at the Ann Arbor Track Club, which is run by Pioneer cross country and track coach Bryan Westfield.

Westfield, who has won two consecutive state championships in girls track, said he was unaware of any investigation when reached at his home Wednesday night.

Seattle-Pacific strikes early to beat Pioneers

Whatever dreams of grandeur Oakland University's men's soccer team harbored going into Saturday's NCAA Division II championship match at Seattle-Pacific were dashed quickly.

S-P scored all the goals it needed in the opening 10 minutes to successfully defend the Division II title. The game was over, rolling over the Pioneers 4-1.

The game was decided almost before OU got started. The Pioneers were flat, which supplied S-P with all the opportunity it needed. Just 2:42 had expired when Chris MacDonald scored the game's first goal.

MacDonald finished a play started by Scott Cairns' free kick from 30 yards out. Chuck Sekyra fielded Cairns' kick and tipped it to MacDonald at the far post for a goal-scoring header and a 1-0 lead.

S-P CONNECTED again just 52 seconds later, and again MacDonald played a key role. His corner kick was not handled by the Pioneer defense in front of the net, slipping through to Mark Faller who was alone — again at the far post — with

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no one to beat but OU keeper Vince Albert. Faller did, making it 2-0.

OU's defense was in disarray, and it was only the official's whistle that kept the Pioneer hopes alive. S-P got two more goals before the game was off on offside calls.

The Pioneers regrouped, and at the 39:10 mark they pulled to within 2-1. Freshman midfielder Erik Enyedy (from Southfield) won the ball at midfield and broke down the right side. He sent a pass ahead to Simon Mayo, a freshman forward who just rejoined OU after missing a month with a foot injury.

Mayo took the ball deep into S-P territory, then dropped a pass back to Marty Hagen (Troy Athens) who drilled it into the net.

The goal supplied the Pioneers with momentum entering the second half, but keeper Jeff Storrs stole it

back for S-P. OU had several solid scoring chances in the first 10 minutes after intermission, notably by Brian Fitzgerald (Southfield) and Tom Duff (Birmingham Seaholm). But Storrs frustrated both with good saves.

THE CLINCHER came at the 55:53 mark. S-P's Craig Otosen looped the ball over the OU defense and Matt Smith broke in, fielded it and scored, making it 3-1.

The champions added a fourth goal at 79:44 on a penalty kick by Bob Bruch, awarded when Mike Carlstrom was called for pulling Bruch down in the penalty box. OU continued to apply the pressure, but the Pioneers failed to penetrate the S-P defense for any solid scoring chances.

"Our biggest problem was the first 10 minutes of the game," said OU coach Gary Parsons. "They got those two quick goals and it took us a long time to settle down. But they were definitely the better team today, and they never let us back into the game."

OU finished 14-6-3.